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Message from the Mayor

We had a terrific year here in the District of Columbia. I'm proud that we've come together as a city to make progress on some of the challenges that we face. In doing so, we're moving our city forward.

In particular, I'm extremely proud of how we responded as a city to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina last fall. Our residents and the city government came together in September to shelter and assist nearly 300 people from the Gulf Coast after that region was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The DC Armory was quickly mobilized into a shelter with dozens of federal and local agencies and thousands of Washington-area residents and volunteers providing help. It was a testament to what we can accomplish when we work together toward a common goal.

I'm also proud that we're building an economic foundation to help our city succeed in the long term. Over the past few years, the District has emerged as the strongest and most resilient economy in the country. From office and residential markets to the hospitality/tourism industry and educational institutions, we have a development dynamic best illustrated by \$12 billion worth of projects completed since 2001 and the \$6.6 billion currently under construction.

Overall crime is down seven percent for the year. This follows reductions of 18 percent in 2004 and nearly 9 percent in 2003. Homicides – while still way too high – are running even with last year. Auto thefts are down 16 percent. After spiking to 24 last year, the number of juvenile homicides is down to 11 this year. Firearm recoveries are up 14 percent.

We're also making progress on cleaning up our environment. This year, I signed legislation establishing a new Department of the Environment for the District of Columbia. This new department will help consolidate and sharpen the focus on our environmental efforts.

We ended fiscal year 2004 with a local fund surplus of \$230.5 million and a cumulative general fund balance of \$1.2 billion, exceeding the billion dollar mark for the first time ever. In May, we announced the availability of the city's new online Service Request Center where citizens can submit service requests via the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In the end, we had a productive year and I'll be proud to continue serving as mayor of the District through 2006. We have lots of ground left to cover, and I hope you'll join me in my efforts to continue making progress.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human
Services

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

Partnering to Help the DC Public Library

I'm a huge supporter of nurturing innovative partnerships to help our city. So I'm pleased to join our District of Columbia Public Library in announcing a new service known as "Xtreme Mobile." This new mobile library, which has been doing test runs in the Anacostia, Benning, Shaw and Tenleytown neighborhoods will bring books, computers and programs into the communities whose libraries were closed late last year for reconstruction. The Xtreme Mobile will make scheduled stops each week at specific locations in the neighborhoods.

The traveling library measures 32 feet long and 105 inches high. It is completely enveloped in a vibrant, colorful graphic wrap depicting varying elements of the D.C. Public Library and its services. The library can hold up to 10 customers and staff when parked at a designated location and is capable of carrying 2,750 volumes on its shelves and book trucks. The Xtreme Mobile is outfitted with four wireless public computers that customers can use to access the Internet, CityCat – the library's online book catalog, reference databases and log on to Homework Help. In addition to checking out books and using computers, customers will also be able to get a library card, request interlibrary loan materials and participate in programs.

Programming associated with the Xtreme Mobile will be done both outside, under the truck's retractable awning, and inside various participating facilities where the unit is stationed. Additionally, the Xtreme Mobile will be available for events sponsored by other governmental and community agencies.

The Xtreme Mobile is one of three mobile units operated by the District of Columbia Public Library, but it is the only one with Internet access. The other units include the ROAR van (Reach Out and Read), which visits in-home day care facilities and brings reading material to caregivers who otherwise would be unable to access the library, and the Book Mobile, which travels to various communities and mainly serves the elderly population.

For the schedule for the Xtreme Mobile from now through January 2006 please visit our DC Public Library online at dclibrary.org.

Future 2006 schedules for the Xtreme Mobile are available at (202)727-4804.

Housing Finance Agency Low-Rate Loans

As many of our readers will remember, I made a commitment to bring 100,000 new residents to Washington, and the collective efforts of the city's housing agencies are helping us to make good on this promise.

For the first time in three years, the DC Housing Finance Agency will fund \$17 million under its DC Bond Program to assist low- and moderate-income residents to become homeowners. Now that commercial interest rates are climbing back up, this program can be a real life-saver to people who want to buy a home but are afraid the market is too expensive.

Through this program, potential homebuyers are offered a low-rate of 4.7 percent for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage loan or an assisted-rate mortgage loan at 5.95 percent with a 4 percent grant for down payment and closing cost assistance. The Bond Program is a very flexible program that's open to first-time homebuyers and repeat homebuyers who are buying homes in targeted areas in the city.

The DC Bond Program's low-rate loans can be combined with the Department of Housing and Community Development's Home Purchase Assistance Program, and the funds can also be used to help enroll in the DC Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program.

This year, the HFA has partnered with three banks to help issue loans under the program. Residents can contact BF Saul, SunTrust Mortgage and Industrial Bank to apply for a loan under the DC Bond Program. Since its establishment in 1979, the HFA has provided more than \$497 million in tax-exempt bonds to help more than 5,700 residents become homeowners. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this city program designed to help bring down the cost of financing a home.



21st Annual Mayor's Arts Awards Gala

Here is a brief reminder to readers that the 21st Annual Mayor's Arts Awards Gala is on the horizon.

The stars of the District of Columbia arts and cultural community will be honored at the 21st Annual Mayor's Arts Awards Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the Concert Hall. The ceremony will feature award presentations by members of the city's cultural community as well as live dance, music and poetry performances.

The ceremony is free and open to the public, but reservations are a must. To make reservations, call (202) 724-5613.

The event will feature the following performers:

- Three Mo' Tenors
- Quintango
- Carina Losano and Fabio Bonini
- Vanessa R. Williams featuring the Shiloh Baptist Church Gospel Choir
- Levine School of Music's Metropolitan World Symphony
- Dance Asia Alliance
- Raquel Brown
- Isaac Colon
- Sage Morgan-Hubbard

When: Monday January 9, 2006 at 6 PM

Where: John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F Street, NW
Washington, DC

Street Sweeping Suspended Through March

As is the case every winter, our city's Department of Public Works (DPW) will temporarily suspend routine residential street cleaning from January 9 to March 17, 2006. During this time, "No Parking/Street Cleaning" restrictions will be lifted. Residents and visitors who park along posted, alternate-side, daytime street sweeping routes will not be required to move their cars on street-sweeping days during the sweeper hiatus.

Residential street cleaning resumes Monday, March 20, 2006.

However, overnight sweeping scheduled for the District's major arteries (such as Pennsylvania, Georgia, Constitution and Independence Avenues, and others) will take place as usual all winter, with the attendant parking ban during sweeping hours. Motorists are urged not to park in these areas during the posted overnight hours.

As colder weather approaches, motorists are also reminded that during declared snow emergencies, vehicles can be ticketed and towed if they remain parked on designated snow emergency routes. Look for the red and white signs before parking this winter.



District Activities



Mayor Williams stops by the Joy in the City 2005 "It's a Family Affair" outreach event at the DC Armory.



Mayor Williams helps promote the 2006 Washington Auto Show, which runs January 24-29 at the Washington Convention Center.



Mayor Anthony Williams signs an Exclusive Rights Agreement with Howard University President Patrick Swygert to build a new hospital (National Capital Medical Center).



Mayor Williams helps DC resident Shirlene Archer with a permit for home improvements.

Community News

- [Mayor Promotes Free Memberships at the District's Recreation Centers](#)
- [Mayor Williams Pitches Wager with Philadelphia Mayor John Street on Redskins-Eagles Game](#)
- [Mayor Williams Signs Papers to Build New Hospital with Howard University](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All](#) [News Releases](#)

1/7	Grand Opening Ceremony 12 pm Chinatown Community Cultural Center Gallery Place Complex 616 H Street, NW, Suite 201
1/9	21st Annual Mayor Arts Awards 6 pm Kennedy Center For reservations, call (202) 724-5613
1/15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration 3 pm University of the District of Columbia 4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW Building 46 For more information, call (202) 727-6306

